Media And Gender

Addicted to crassness

Two commercials which portray women in poor light are put under the scanner.

C.S.H.N.MURTHY and REETAMONI DAS wonder if the government is likely to step in to stop these from being aired

Posted/Updated Monday, Apr 18 15:37:11, 2011

Did UPA –I government do better than the present UPA-II when it came to treating crass commercials in the television channels? One cannot forget the pro-active and aggressive Priyaranjan Das Munshi (then Minister for Information and Broadcasting), for his alacrity in banning at least temporarily the television channels-- MTV (2006) and FTV and Live India (2007) for displaying crass commercials on their channels.

A series of advertisements of *Sprite*, *Addiction and* Axe being aired on *Zee TV* (Telugu), *ETV2, TV5, TV9,* etc. could easily qualify as crass. Let us consider *'Sprite'* and *'Addiction'* on the basis of the description laid down by Hansen et al (1998) using 'moving image analysis' technique (Hansen A, Cottle S, Negrine R and Newbold C, 1998: 130).

There are two commercials for 'Sprite' from the University of Freshology: one teaches a cool guy how to cheat his girl friend (Lesson No.#22), and the other shows how to fool one's girl friend who is talking about her childhood friend and boring the present boy friend in a pub/hotel (Lesson No. # 5).

The addiction commercial shows the anger of a bikini clad girl, who is incensed at finding her boy friend in a car with another girl, evaporate as she is engulfed by the erotic fumes of the perfume he is wearing. She ends up asking, ``may I also join you?' Next frame shows the man in the courtship of both the women in the car.

The Spritead shows how guys find other girls irresistible and that girls are too stupid to realize the games that boys play. It also shows how boys can learn to divert their girl's attention after drinking sprite.The common refrain of the university teacher is, ``*first drink, then think."* The second ad tells us how girls are boring with their recollections and how stupid boys want to escape this. It is Sprite which comes to his rescue as he manages to bring home to her, after drinking it, that she is boring.
The moot question is - Is *Sprite* essentially a male drink? In both these commercials the Freshology teacher offers *Sprite* to the boy and implies that it will generate cunning ideas. Why only boys? Has a market survey revealed that Sprite is a male drink? Even if it were so, it does not give the producers of the ad the right to show women in such poor light. It does not make good sense even as a marketing strategy. The commercial tends to insinuate that girls are dumb. One is left wondering if the makers of Sprite want it only to be a male product or if they imagine that the girls, on seeing how it had transformed their stupid boyfriends, may also begin consuming Sprite.

In terms of Visuals also while the girlfriend has been captured in a twin frame throughout the ad-design, shown in a eye to eye contact level medium shot, sporting innocent looks with a susceptible face, the boyfriend is showcased in single frame, with an iniquitous facial expression in eye to eye and single close up shots (as many as 5 shots). He is rejoicing.

Portraying the sexy man in charge of affairs, the Addiction ad is equally offensive to women. It shows that a man may be promiscuous in front of his girlfriend, who swoons at the perfume he is wearing and is willing to share him with the other girl. The commercial ***(Tagline--lasts long really long)*** shows how addiction will give a guy unlimited access to girls. It shows how a girl's moral fabric is

MORE MEDIA AND GENDER

Portrait of brave hearts

Sexist rage against reality show anchor

Harrassed on assignment

A goldmine on feminism

Addicted to crassness

Net Neutrality survival basic for women's media

Relating to TV soap characters

Women's Day circus

Lakshmi Jain instituted the Chameli Devi Award

Women are still read less, seen less, heard less

SUPPORT THE HOOT

FOLLOW US

MEDIA JOB OF THE WEEK

New Business Age Pvt. Ltd in Nepal is hiring a Copy Editor
New Business Age Pvt. Ltd., the pioneer of Economic Journalism in Nepal has been publishing New Business Age (monthly business magazine in English), Aarthik Abh

Opening at The Statesman
The Statesman needs correspondents at Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Raipur and Gangtok to cover the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhatisgarh and Sikkim respectively. Appl

weak and can be broken down by a perfume.

The visuals show the girl as being angry and the boy as being lackadaisical. He is indifferent to her feelings. The shots show him taking pride in being able to cheat his girlfriend.

The ad shows that to a guy a girl's emotions are not important, that promiscuity is okay, that women can be exposed to skimpy clothing and shabby treatment. One wonders if the ad would have been different had there been a female version of Addiction.

There is nothing wrong in tying to market a product, but advertisers and companies have a social responsibility and they need to consider the message they are sending to the younger generation.

While the present study has covered only these two advertisements, there are many others which send the wrong message to views. The present government needs to take cognizance of this and take steps to stop the airing of such insulting ads.

cshnmurthy@yahoo.co.in& Reetamoni@gamil.com

BACK TO TOP

PRINT COMMENT ON STORY EMAIL

View Comments on Story - (3)

MORE JOBS

POLL

Is Manish Tewari a good choice for the Information and Broadcasting portfolio?

Yes

No

Cannot say

Vote Result

SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEWSLETTER

Copyright 2011. THE HOOT. All Rights Reserved.